

FEBS NEWS

FEBS Executive Committee, 1971–72

Chairman: Professor T.K. Nikolov, Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Biology, Sofia, Moskowska Street 49, Bulgaria.

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Secretary-General: Professor H.R.V. Arnstein, Department of Biochemistry, King's College, Strand, London WC2R 2LS, England.

Treasurer: Professor S.P. Datta, Department of Biochemistry, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT, England.

Chairman of the Publications Committee: Professor Bo G. Malmström, Göteborgs Universitet och Chalmers Tekniska Högskola, Institutionen för Biokemi, Fack, S-402 20 Göteborg 5, Sweden.

Chairman of the Advanced Courses Committee: Professor M. Gruber, Biochemisch Laboratorium der Rijksuniversiteit te Groningen, Zernikelaan, Groningen, The Netherlands.

A report on the activities of FEBS during the past year and its future programme

by H.R.V. ARNSTEIN
FEBS Secretary-General, London

Every year, at the time of the annual FEBS meeting, delegates from the constituent societies of the Federation take part in a meeting of the Council to review current activities and discuss the future programme. The eleventh Council Meeting was held on Thursday, 23rd September, 1971, at the International House of Scientists, Drouzhba, near Varna, Bulgaria, and the following resumé will, it is hoped, provide useful information to individual members of the Federation.

1. *Publications.* FEBS has two biochemical journals, the *European Journal of Biochemistry*, published by Springer-Verlag, and *FEBS Letters*, published by the North-Holland Publishing Company, and both continue to thrive. The *European Journal of Biochemistry* is now the sixth largest biochemical journal in the world and from the beginning has maintained the highest standards. *FEBS Letters* has almost doubled in size within the last two years and, like the *EJB*, is a truly international journal with papers during the past twelve months originating from 30 different countries. The Federation owes a debt of gratitude to all the editors concerned with the two journals, but especially to Professor

C. Liébecq (Liège), Editor-in-Chief of the *EJB*, and Professor S.P. Datta (London), Managing Editor of *FEBS Letters*, as well as to their staff for their efforts which have contributed so much to the success of these publications.

In addition to the two journals, FEBS publishes a *Bulletin* twice a year. This is distributed by most of the constituent societies and should reach nearly all members. The *Bulletin* represents an important channel of communication and if any member has difficulty in receiving a copy he should contact the secretary of his society or me personally.

2. *Advanced Courses.* A second major activity of FEBS is the organization of advanced courses (formerly called summer schools). The programme of courses is planned by a Committee on Advanced Courses under the chairmanship of Professor M. Gruber (Groningen), but detailed plans and arrangements are the responsibility of course organizers and it is a pleasure to take this opportunity to thank them for their important contribution to the success of these courses. In 1970–71 there were five courses, namely Membrane Biochemistry (Tihany, Hungary. Organizer: G. Gárdos); Glycolipids in Membranes (Helsinki, Finland. Organizer: O. Renkonen); Biochemistry of Morphogenesis (Berlin, Germany. Organizer: H. Tiedemann); Transcription of the Gene: Biochemistry and Genetics (Hintermoos, Austria. Organizers: E. Bautz, E. Wintersberger and U. Wintersberger) and Catalytic and Regulatory Properties of Enzymes (Borik, Yugoslavia. Organizer: P. Mildner). The tentative programme for 1972 will consist of four courses: Modern Aspects of Chemical Carcinogenesis (London, April. Organizer: P. Magee); Enzyme Regulation (Madrid, June. Organizer: A. Sols); Mathematical Models of Metabolic Regulation (Jena, November. Organizers: H. Frunder and J.G. Reich) and Sequencing of RNA (Strasbourg, May or October. Organizer: J.P. Ebel).

In the beginning, FEBS summer schools were generously supported by funds from various organizations, but more recently a grant from the Volkswagenstiftung over a period of some three years has enabled the programme to be greatly expanded and this help is gratefully acknowledged. In the future, however, the Federation itself will be able to finance courses from the income derived from publications and the Council of FEBS has approved plans to spend up to £6,000 in 1971–72 on supporting advanced courses. In addition, Council decided to provide £600 p.a. for a Travel Fund to assist young biochemists to attend FEBS courses and it is hoped to augment these resources by a special appeal.

3. *Other Activities.* Under the auspices of FEBS, an Exchange of Laboratory Protocols has been organized by Professor R. Crokaert. This enables biochemistry departments which agree to take part in the scheme to obtain full details of class

experiments suitable for elementary teaching in return for making similar information available to other participants. FEBS has also instituted a hospitality scheme, which is operated by representatives of constituent societies who should be contacted directly with offers or requests in connection with accommodation, exchange holidays for children and similar matters.

4. *Collaboration with the International Union of Biochemistry (IUB) and with the Pan American Association of Biochemical Societies (PAABS).* Since last year, there has been increasing co-operation between FEBS, PAABS and IUB and at the Council meeting a proposal to set up a Joint Working Party to consider biochemical education was approved. Professor P.N. Campbell (IUB) (Leeds) is acting as Convenor and the FEBS representatives on this working party are Professors S.M. Rapoport (Berlin) and G. Semenza (Zürich). It has also been agreed to collaborate with PAABS in the publication of the FEBS *Bulletin* and information from IUB will also be published there. In addition, the Secretaries-General of PAABS and FEBS regularly exchange copies of the circulars which are distributed to constituent societies and this provides a further channel of communication between FEBS and PAABS.

5. *Annual FEBS Meetings.* Although the annual FEBS meeting is mentioned last in this report, it must not be forgotten that the main initial purpose of FEBS was to encourage co-operation between individual biochemists by holding annual meetings which are organized by constituent societies and this is still one of the most important functions of FEBS. This year's meeting in Varna was attended by nearly 2,000 biochemists, most of whom were active members. In addition to a large number of free communications, there were three Symposia (1. Biochemistry of Cell Differentiation, 2. Functional Units in Protein Biosynthesis and 3. Virus-Cell Interactions and Viral Metabolites), four Colloquia (1. Membrane Phenomena and Oxidative Phosphorylation, 2. Cellular and Enzymatic Control of Monoamine Metabolism, 3. Nucleic Acids and Proteins of the Central Nervous System and 4. Molecular Genetics of Antibody Formation) and a Round Table Discussion on Teaching of Biochemistry and Education of Biochemists. It is expected that the Symposia will be published by Academic Press London, Ltd. early in 1972. In this connection, the important work of both the organizers of the Symposia and the FEBS Symposium Co-ordinator (Professor D. Shugar) (Warsaw) deserves special mention. Two main lectures were also given at the meeting, the opening lecture by Professor S. Bergström on "Prostaglandins - A Family of Bioregulators with Clinical Utilities" and the Third Sir Hans Krebs Lecture by Professor D.C. Phillips entitled "Structure-Function Relationships in Enzyme Molecules". Although it seems to be fashionable nowadays to belittle the importance of large scientific gatherings, those able to be present at the Varna meeting will, I think, agree that it served a useful

purpose, not only because it enabled biochemists from all over Europe to meet each other but also because of the intrinsic scientific value of the various contributions. The arrangements for the meeting were generally excellent and our Bulgarian hosts deserve much praise for organizing a meeting of this magnitude so smoothly.

By now, everyone will have received the first announcement of the 8th Meeting of FEBS which will be held on 20-25 August 1972 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and we all look forward to an interesting scientific programme. Although there is an International Congress of Biochemistry in Stockholm in 1973, Council decided, as an experiment, to hold a Special FEBS Meeting on Industrial Biochemistry on 16-20 April 1973 in Dublin, Ireland, and this will be arranged by the Irish Area Section of the Biochemical Society. The next regular FEBS meeting, however, will take place in 1974 and Council has accepted the offer of the Hungarian Biochemical Society to organize this meeting in Budapest.

6. *Organization of FEBS.* The organization of FEBS is governed by the Statutes, which are published with this report. Following an initial period of rapid growth and evolution which involved frequent changes in the Statutes, it seems likely that they will now remain relatively unaltered for a time. At present, FEBS comprises 24 biochemical societies, and nearly every European country is included. Delegates from these constituent societies constitute the Council, which at its annual meeting discusses all matters of policy. At the 11th Council meeting in Varna on 23 September 1971 the following delegates, officers and observers were present: G. Kreil (Austria), R. Crokaert (Belgium), T.K. Nikolov (Bulgaria), I. Rychlík (Czechoslovakia), B. Foltmann (Denmark), J. Järnefelt (Finland), J.P. Ebel (France), S.M. Rapoport (German Democratic Republic), G. Schreiber (German Federal Republic), A.P. Mathias (Great Britain), F. Guba (Hungary), U. Bachrach (Israel), P. Cerletti (Italy), L.L.M. van Deenen and S.G. van den Bergh (The Netherlands), F. Gran (Norway), Z. Zielińska (Poland), H.D. Schell (Romania), F. Mayor (Spain), L. Ernster (Sweden), J.-P. von Wartburg (Switzerland), W.L. Kretovitch (U.S.S.R.), P. Mildner (Yugoslavia), H.R.V. Arnstein (Secretary-General), M. Gruber (Chairman, Advanced Courses Committee), S.P. Datta (Treasurer), C. Liébecq (Chairman, Publications Committee), M.G. Harrington (Irish Area Section, Biochemical Society, Observer), G. Semenza (Switzerland, Observer), W.J. Whelan (Pan American Association of Biochemical Societies, Observer), H.G. Wood (International Union of Biochemistry, Observer), B. Ryman (Recorder).

In the periods between Council meetings, the overall responsibility for FEBS is vested in the Executive Committee. Matters concerning publications and courses are dealt with by the Publications Committee and Advanced Courses Committee respectively. The composition of the Executive Committee for 1971-72 is given above.

Statutes of the Federation of European Biochemical Societies (adopted at the tenth Council Meeting in Zürich on 2 September 1970).

1. *Objects of the Federation*

The Federation is established for the public benefit to advance research and education in the science of biochemistry and to publish or arrange for the publication of the results of biochemical research and other information tending to advance the science of biochemistry.

For those purposes or either of them

- (a) to hold and arrange instructional courses on matters connected with biochemistry and
- (b) to facilitate the exchange of scientific information between biochemists generally and especially European biochemists by the holding of meetings and discussions and by other appropriate means.

Since the aim of the Federation is to advance biochemistry and not to benefit personally the biochemists who are members of the Federation the publications and other facilities provided by the Federation shall so far as practicable and subject to any reasonable charge be made available to persons who are not members as well as members.

2. *Administration and Membership*

- (a) The Federation shall consist of Biochemical Societies in the European area. All members of the Constituent Societies are *ipso facto* members of the Federation with equal privileges.
- (b) New admissions of Biochemical Societies to membership of the Federation are to be decided by its Council, provided that the Society making the application has lodged full details and documentation of its activities with the Secretary-General at least three months before the Council meeting.
- (c) The affairs of the Federation shall be conducted by a Council. The Council may empower a Constituent Society to act on its behalf.
- (d) Each Constituent Society shall nominate one delegate or a deputy to the Council of the Federation. The delegate shall be re-appointed biannually by the Constituent Society.
- (e) The Council shall from time to time appoint one of the Constituent Societies to be the Host Society. The delegate to the Council of the Host Society shall when present act as Chairman of the Council and is in this Statute referred to as the Chairman.
- (f) The Council shall appoint the following officers namely a Secretary-General, a Treasurer, a Chairman of the Publications Committee and a Chairman of the Advanced Courses Committee. Each of these officers shall serve for a term of three years but shall be eligible for re-appointment. None of these officers shall be a delegate of his Constituent Society. Each of these officers and also the immediate past Chairman shall be ex-officio a full member of the Council with the right to vote.

- (g) Except as otherwise expressly provided by these Statutes any matter to be decided by the Council shall be decided by a simple majority vote of those present and voting at a meeting of the Council.
- (h) The Council shall meet at each General Meeting of the Federation and at such other times as may be necessary.
- (i) Subject to the Council the administration of the Federation shall be vested in an Executive Committee consisting of the Chairman the immediate past Chairman the Secretary-General the Treasurer the Chairman of the Publications Committee and the Chairman of the Advanced Courses Committee. They shall be empowered to act on behalf of the Council and to enter into contracts in the period between meetings of the Council.
- (j) Any Constituent Society is free to withdraw from the Federation at a meeting of the Council provided notice of such a withdrawal has been communicated to the Chairman at least one month before the Council Meeting.

3. *Meetings of the Federation*

- (a) A General Meeting of the Federation shall be held at least every two years at a place chosen by the Host Society and approved by the Council. A General Meeting shall also be open to non-members.
- (b) A General Meeting of the Federation shall provide opportunities for the presentation of original communications, demonstrations, and symposia. The detailed arrangements for the Meeting shall be at the entire discretion of the Host Society.
- (c) The financial arrangements for a Federation Meeting are the responsibility of the Host Society. Registration fees for those attending a General Meeting may be charged by the Host Society and members of all Constituent Societies shall be charged on the same basis.

4. *Exchange of Information*

- (a) Each Constituent Society shall send to a nominated officer of all other Constituent Societies the same relevant circulars that it sends to its own members.
- (b) It shall be the duty of each Constituent Society to publicize the activities of the other Constituent Societies so as to encourage contacts between biochemists in the different European countries, and on request to circulate to its members information of the next Federation meeting.

5. *Attendance at Domestic Meetings*

Any member of the Federation, may, on making proper application, be admitted to an open meeting of a Constituent Society other than his own, on the same terms as if he were a member of that Society, although permission to present a paper shall be at the discretion of the Society holding the meeting.

6. Central Fund

There shall be formed a central fund, composed of membership fees, royalties and other income. The membership fee shall be determined from time to time by the Council. The fund shall be applied to further the objects of the Federation.

7. Dissolution of the Federation

The Federation and its Statutes may be dissolved at any time at a meeting of the Council at which two-thirds of the delegates are present and at which there is two-thirds affirmative majority vote in favour of the proposal. The proposal must be notified in writing to the Secretary-General, at least three months before a Council Meeting. The Secretary-General shall in turn notify all Constituent Societies of such proposals, at least two months before the Council Meeting. On the dissolution of the Federation any surplus assets of the Federation shall in such manner as the Council may decide be applied for charitable purposes in connection with the advancement of research and education in the science of biochemistry.

8. Statutes of the Federation

The Statutes of the Federation may be amended, deleted, or augmented at any Council meeting by a two-thirds affirmative majority vote, provided that at least two-thirds of the delegates are present. Proposed changes must be notified in writing to the Secretary-General, at least three months before a Council Meeting. The Secretary-General shall in turn notify all Constituent Societies of such proposals, at least two months before the Council Meeting. No change shall be made which would extend the objects of the Federation beyond the main objects of advancing education and research in the science of biochemistry and publishing or arranging for the publication of the results of biochemical research and other information tending to advance the science of biochemistry and charitable purposes ancillary to those main objects.

9. Location of Office

The principal office of the Federation shall be situated in England and until otherwise decided by the Council shall be at the office of the (British) Biochemical Society*.

10. English law to apply

The Federation shall be deemed to be an association governed by the Law of England and these Statutes shall be construed and operate in accordance with English Law.

* The Biochemical Society, 7 Warwick Court, London, WC1R 5DP, England.

IUB Officers, 1971-72

President: Professor H. Theorell, Medicinska Nobelinstitutet, Biokemiska avdelning, Solnavägen 1, S-104 01 Stockholm 60, Sweden.

Vice President: Professor J. Heller, Instytut Biochemii i Biofizyki, Polska Akademia Nauk, Rakowiecka 36, Warszawa 12, Poland.

General Secretary: Professor H.G. Wood, Department of Biochemistry, Case Western Reserve University, 2109 Adelbert Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44106, USA.

Treasurer: Professor E.C. Slater, Laboratorium voor Biochemie, B.C.P. Jansen Instituut, Plantage Muidergracht 12, Amsterdam-C, The Netherlands.

International Union of Biochemistry

Report for 1970-71 of the Chairman of the Advisory Symposium Committee

Professor P.N. Campbell, Department of Biochemistry, 9 Hyde Terrace, Leeds, LS2 9LS, England.

The Committee was newly constituted in September 1970. It consists of 13 members drawn from many areas of the world. Its terms of reference are to advise the Executive Committee of IUB on all matters concerned with Symposia. The Committee agreed to a statement of policy and this was widely circulated in the Autumn of 1970. This statement indicated that the Committee believed that IUB had an important role in fostering Symposia on a world-wide basis, especially in the years when an I.U.B. Congress was not being held. It was agreed that special attention should be given to those geographical areas where the biochemists are in special need of support. In order that the Symposia should be of lasting benefit it was also proposed that the subject matter of Symposia should reflect the interests of the host laboratory. Proposals for the sponsorship of Symposia with or without a financial subvention from I.U.B. were invited on the basis that the organisers of each Symposium would welcome applications from biochemists irrespective of nationality and on the understanding that the Symposium would receive world-wide publicity.

The Committee in the year since its formation has endeavoured to work within the above framework. All proposals received have been circulated to all members of the Committee who have been kept fully informed of all developments by regular correspondence. The Executive Committee of I.U.B. has agreed to all proposals put forward from the Symposium Committee and the information has then been sent to 10 addresses for dissemination on a world-wide basis. In particular the lists of meetings prepared by Professor S.P. Datta and those circulated by The Biochemical Society, FEBS and PAABS have been most effective.

It has been agreed to sponsor the following Symposia in 1971:

- No. 45 15–16 April, "Nerve Growth Factor", Department of Chemistry, University College London. Professors C.A. Vernon and Eleanor Zaimis and Dr. D.C. Edwards.
- No. 46 11–17 July, "Molecular Basis of Biological Activity", Caracas, Venezuela, as part of the First PAABS Congress. Dr. K. Gaede.
- No. 47 9–10 November, "Biochemistry of Complex Carbohydrate Polymers, an Integrated View", Bariloche, Argentina. Dr. H.G. Pontis.
- No. 48 3–4 December, International Symposium on Lipids. "Metabolism of isoprenoid compounds, Biosynthesis of lipids, Lipids in structure and function of membranes". Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, India. Professor J. Ganguly.

- No. 49 25–26 November, "Symposium on Genetic Expression", Santiago, Chile. Professor J.E. Allende.

The Executive Committee has set aside \$15,000 for the support of Symposia in 1971, and the above programme should be met by this budget.

For 1972 it has so far been agreed to sponsor the following:

- No. 50 15–19 May, "The Biochemistry of Gene Expression in Higher Organisms", Sydney University, Australia. Dr. J.W. Lee.
- No. 51 10–14 July, Joint IUB/IUBS Symposium on "Aspects of Plant Biochemistry", Leeds, England. Professor P.N. Campbell.

A further proposal for 1972 for Argentina is now being reviewed as is one for 1973 in Canada.

Many aspects of the work of the Committee have been discussed and some of these call for mention.

The Committee has been conscious of the needs of biochemists in developing countries. In these circumstances, support from I.U.B. might be very helpful in promoting the subject. One of our approaches to a charity for a special fund for this purpose has been declined but there is reason to think that if we received a request where the planned

Symposium could be of lasting benefit to the host country then financial support from some source would probably be forthcoming.

We have had a number of requests for the support of Summer Schools but have reluctantly turned these down. We interpret a School as being an occasion where most of the effort is devoted to the education of students and there is rather little exchange of ideas. It was decided that we should only sponsor meetings where there was a sufficient body of expert opinion in the audience to promote a good discussion and where the lecturers are drawn from a number of different countries. In spite of this ruling, we realise that the dividing line between Symposia and Summer Schools is a fine one and we intend to feel our way carefully.

The planned joint IUB/IUBS Symposium calls for some comment. It has been the policy of the Committee not only to sponsor Symposia that are already in embryo but also to look for opportunities to initiate symposia in appropriate subjects. We are aware that plant biochemists often feel that their aspect of the subject is relatively neglected and so we thought that I.U.B. might help in organising a Symposium on the subject in a year in which there is no Congress. We were also aware that I.U.B.S. had expressed an interest in holding a joint Symposium. Accordingly, a proposal for such a joint Symposium on plant biochemistry to be held in the Summer of 1972 was put to I.U.B.S. The proposal was readily accepted. The timing is convenient to those likely to be interested. An Organising Committee has been set up with representatives from several different countries but including those from The Biochemical and Phytochemical Societies who are assisting in the organisation. It is tentatively agreed that the general topic should be nitrogen metabolism and that nucleic acid, protein and alkaloid biosynthesis will be covered. Each Union will contribute towards the cost of travel of the 18 lecturers to be invited.

The Symposium programme appears to be taking shape but is not yet as extensive as we could wish. We would welcome further suggestions in the hope that I.U.B. Symposia can be of further help in the development of biochemistry. As the programme expands so more biochemists should become aware of the benefits of international collaboration through I.U.B. and hopefully more funds will become available. The Committee therefore invites suggestions especially from geographical areas which have not yet benefited from the programme.